



**MONTANA
AMERICAN
INDIAN CAUCUS**

ADDRESS:

PO Box 200500
HELENA, MT 59620
PHONE: 406.444.4722
FAX: 406.444.4362

SENATE MEMBERS:

SHANNON AUGARE
SHARON STEWART-PEREGOY
JONATHAN WINDY BOY

HOUSE MEMBERS:

TONY BELCOURT
LILA EVANS
CAROLYN PEASE-LOPEZ
STERLING SMALL
FRANK SMITH

CAUCUS STAFF:

LUKE WALAWANDER

March 16th, 2011

The Honorable Terry Murphy, Chair, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

Sen. Shannon Augare
Sen. Anders Blewett
Sen. Jeff Essman
Sen. Greg Hinkle

Sen. Rowlie Hutton
Sen. Larry Jent
Sen. Cliff Larsen
Sen. Lynda Moss

Sen. Jim Peterson
Sen. Jim Shockley
Sen. Chas Vincent

Dear Chairman Murphy:

The Montana American Indian Caucus expresses its strong support for HB 95, which would generally revise the human rights law to include the authorization of Indian employment preference on or near reservations.

As it stands in Montana, firms who wish to do business with tribal governments comply with federal law when recognizing TERO (Tribal Employments Rights Office) regulations, but there is an inconsistency with Montana state law. Private enterprise is halted when the rule of law does not establish steady, consistent, and reliable legal ground upon which to build business.

HB 95 addresses this issue, clarifying Indian preference for tribes and private enterprise, so that business development can happen free of jurisdictional inconsistencies and within the scope of both state and federal statute.

This inclusion of Indian employment preference will surely help generate tribal economic development and private enterprise opportunities for our tribal members, both on and near reservations.

Furthermore, the Montana American Indian Caucus supports the overall intent of HB 95, as it demonstrates clear support for anti-discrimination practices in the areas of employment and housing.

The Montana American Indian Caucus strongly urges support, and to pass, HB 95.

With Sincere Support, we are

Shannon Augare
Sharon Stewart-Peregoy
Jonathan Windy Boy
Tony Belcourt
Lila Evans
Carolyn Pease-Lopez
Sterling Small
Frank Smith

EX-107 3
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HB 95